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SUBJECT: BAHRAINI OPTIMISM ON FOUNDATION FOR THE FUTURE

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Susan L. Ziadeh for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

1. (C) During a meeting with the DCM December 19, MFA Assistant Undersecretary for Coordination and Follow-Up Shaikh Abdul Aziz Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa expressed optimism and confidence after returning from the Foundation for the Future meeting at the Dead Sea in Jordan. He also expressed satisfaction at the involvement of several non-G8, non-BMENA countries at the meeting. He said that following the November Forum for the Future conference in Bahrain, there was confusion about Bahrain's status as a participant in the Foundation and ambiguity in the Foundation's direction. The discussions in Jordan brought clarity to these issues and instilled confidence that future steps will lead to an effective organization resulting in funding of civil society projects.

2. (C) Shaikh Abdul Aziz relayed Jordan's concern about Russia's future presidency of the G8 in the context of new Russian legislation that restricts foreign funding to civil society groups. When asked about the issue of Bahraini NGOs accepting Foundation funds, he said that as projects are proposed by civil society groups and then approved by the Foundation board, he does not see any obstacles to Bahraini NGOs accepting Foundation grants. He clarified that the funding would be earmarked for specific NGO projects and not be used for NGO operation and administration.

ZIADEH